

## 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The Purpose and Need presented in this Chapter supplements the Purpose and Need incorporated in the FAP 340, Final Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation (1996 FEIS) and differs from its predecessor in the following ways.

- This Purpose and Need is based on updated 2020 forecasts for population, employment and traffic demand prepared by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) and the Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS). The Purpose and Need in the 1996 FEIS was based on NIPC and CATS 2010 forecasts.
- This Purpose and Need evaluates a more detailed No-Action (Baseline) scenario using traffic projections based on population and employment forecasted to occur in the absence of the Proposed Action. The population, employment and traffic forecasts used in the 1996 FEIS included the Proposed Action.
- This Purpose and Need evaluates project need using quantifiable performance measures including travel demand, travel time and safety.

Pertinent information contained within the 1996 FEIS is not repeated in this document, but rather referred to by hotlink reference signified by blue underlined text. Likewise, the full text of the Draft SEIS is not repeated within this Final SEIS but rather summarized and referenced by blue underlined hotlink text. For electronic versions, click on the hotlink to view the referenced text.

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a Transportation System Improvement that will enhance north-south mobility between I-55 and I-80 to accommodate projected year 2020 travel demand within northeastern Illinois and the Project Corridor.

The Project Corridor encompasses 310 square kilometers (120 square miles) located approximately 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of the City of Chicago within northwestern Will, southern DuPage and southwestern Cook Counties. Exhibit 1-1 presents a general location map. Refer to [Draft SEIS, Section 1.1](#) for a description of Project Corridor limits.

The Project Corridor is located on the urban fringe of the greater Chicago metropolitan area. Given its close proximity to the Chicago central area and suburban job centers, the Project Corridor has undergone rapid growth including development within existing municipalities, municipal expansion through annexation and infill development.



## 1.2 **Need**

A Transportation System Improvement is needed to:

1. Improve Access Between Residential Areas and Regional Job Centers,
2. Achieve Land Use and Transportation Planning Goals,
3. Improve Regional Mobility, and
4. Address Local System Deficiencies.

These four principal needs were identified by comparing present and future levels of transportation service within the Project Corridor, and reviewing the goals and objectives of the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (2020 RTP). The 2020 RTP, the transportation plan for northeastern Illinois, identifies seven goals and thirty-nine objectives. A comparison of the 2020 RTP goals and objectives to the level of transportation service within the Project Corridor identified service deficiencies that were grouped into the four principal needs.

The four principal needs were further developed using an approach structured to ensure that need development was based on planning priorities established within the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (2020 RTP). Ensuring the need criteria were based on the 2020 RTP involved screening a broad set of locally based needs to identify those needs consistent with the 2020 RTP ([IDOT, 2001](#)).

This Chapter presents evidence documenting project need. Project need was documented by quantifying the change in anticipated transportation demand and land use between existing and forecasted year 2020 conditions using empirical measures including travel demand, travel time, safety, cost and other measures. Existing conditions were those present at the initiation of the Draft SEIS. Year 2020 conditions were those projected by CATS, and NIPC to occur in the absence of the Transportation System Improvement. Those conditions represent the year 2020 No-Action (Baseline) scenario. The change between transportation demand and land use for existing conditions and those projected for the 2020 No-Action (Baseline) scenario was quantified and evaluated against the four principal needs for the Transportation System Improvement. Table 1-1 presents a summary of project need.

<b>Table 1-1</b> <b>Summary of Project Need</b>	
Need Criteria	Change Between Existing Conditions and Those Projected for the Year 2020 No-Action (Baseline) Scenario
<b>Improve Access Between Residential Areas and Regional Job Centers</b>	<p>Year 2020 travel times from the Project Corridor to regional job centers are projected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase an average 43 percent and up to 55 percent by year 2020 under the No-Action (Baseline) scenario.</li> </ul> <p>A Transportation System Improvement is needed to reduce these travel times and improve access to jobs.</p>

<b>Table 1-1</b> <b>Summary of Project Need (continued)</b>	
Need Criteria	Change Between Existing Conditions and Those Projected for the Year 2020 No-Action (Baseline) Scenario
<b>Achieve Land Use and Transportation Planning Goals</b>	<p>Population growth and urban development is occurring within the Project Corridor at a rapid pace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between 1990 and 2000 the population of Will County increased 41 percent, making it the second fastest growing county in Illinois. By year 2020, the population of Will County is projected to double.</li> <li>Regional, county and municipal governments have developed land use plans to focus growth within the Project Corridor and provide for the infrastructure needs of that growth in a manner that preserves environmentally sensitive resources.</li> </ul> <p>A Transportation System Improvement is needed to aid in focusing and consolidating growth within the Project Corridor as well as to provide for the transportation needs of that growth.</p>
<b>Improve Regional Mobility</b>	<p>Regional travel times from the Project Corridor to other parts of the northeastern Illinois region are projected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase from 12 to over 25 percent to over three quarters of the region by year 2020 under the No-Action (Baseline) scenario.</li> </ul> <p>A Transportation System Improvement is needed to improve regional mobility.</p>
<b>Address Local System Deficiencies</b>	<p>Within the Project Corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local travel times are projected to increase 150 percent and accidents are projected to increase 43 percent by year 2020 under the No-Action (Baseline) scenario.</li> </ul> <p>A Transportation System Improvement is needed to address local system deficiencies to improve travel times and safety.</p>

Additional evidence and documentation addressing project need is summarized in this Chapter. Refer to [Draft SEIS, Chapter 1](#) for a complete discussion of project need.

### 1.2.1 Improve Access Between Residential Areas and Regional Job Centers

Improve access between residential areas and regional job centers addresses a need to reduce projected year 2020 No-Action (Baseline) travel times from the Project Corridor to regional job centers. The need for improved access between the Project Corridor and regional job centers is documented in the following technical report: [The Socio-Economic and Land Use Impacts of the Proposed I-355 Extension, October 2000](#) ([Draft SEIS, Appendix A](#)). Section II, of this report found:

- The Project Corridor is located in an area deficient in jobs.
- Primary job centers for Project Corridor labor exist within the Chicago central area, DuPage and northwest Cook Counties.
- Job growth within the northeastern Illinois region has shifted from the Chicago central area to northwest Cook County, particularly in the vicinity of O'Hare Airport, which includes its nearby suburbs.